7: Shklovsky -- 207-208 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116, 174, 669, 687

"The conquered people were oppressed, tyrannised over, and tortured under the pretext of punishment for not paying the taxes, but they were not told the amount they ought to pay. Reduced to despair by robbery , torture, and execution, the Yakuts rebelled, but they were no match for the Russians with their firearms, and the rebellion was soon put down. This was followed by a succession of terrible punishments and executions. By order of Golovin, the Yakuts had their noses and ears cut off, eyes put out, or were buried alive in the ground up to the eyes. In the [208] prison at Yakutsk the torturers and the executioners were hard at work from morning till night. But, fortunately for the country, the Governors did not agree about the division of the booty and Gliyebof, who considered himself injured, sent such a very stong message of complaint to Moscow that in 1645 Soushellef , a secretary, was sent to Yakutsk to inquire into the matter, and next year Golovin was dismissed. He was sent to Tobolsk, where he was racked and unmercifully knouted. Two large manuscripts, weighing about a hundred pounds, were filled with the account of his misdeeds. After him a succession of governors was sent, but none remained long; most of them were arrested soon after appointment, but things were not on this account any easier for the Yakuts. Their condition became intolerable when, in July, 1675, Governor Andrew Bamishov was sent to Yakutsk. 'On his appointment,' says the chronicle of Moskvin, 'he took very stong measures, whether because of circumstances or of his own wish is not known, but during his period of office there were terrible exections every day by various cruel methods. The sufferers were Russian Dissenters and Yakutian chiefs."

7: Shklovsky -- 208-209 T-3 (1891-92)1916 Yakut-1-2
116, 174, 669, 687

"It must be said that from the first year of its existence Yakutsk was the destination of exiled Dissenters and political offenders, the latter often arriving with their tongues cut. Governor Barnishov never sat down to table without having previously sent someone to capital punishment, which he gave for the most trifling offences. The victims were quartered, impaled, boiled alive in a cauldron, etc. [209] When the Governor happened to be in a good humour he, as a special favour, ordered hanging instead of the other methods; unfortunately, he was very seldom in a good humour. On the 3rd of July, 1678, this Governor was sent to Tobolsk for having received bribes. Then came Governor Priklonsky, in 1682, when the Yakuts made their last attempt at rebellion. They were joined by the Dissenters and some Cossacks who had married Yakutian wives, and the rebellion ended in the complete defeat of the insurgents. The leader, Djennik, the chief of the Kangalaks Oulooss, was taken wounded and sent to Yakutsk, where he died in the torture-chamber. He was flayed alive, his newly-born child wrapped in the skin, while the mother was put on the rack.

The remnant of the insurgents fled to the Vilui, the Yana, and the Kolyma, and on the banks of these rivers they settled. The fugitives brought to these far-away regions terrible accounts of their conquerors, and the dread of the Russians was so great that when, in the course of their campaign against the natives, the Russians came to the

7: Shklovsky -- 208-209 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut-2
116, 174, 669, 687

Kolyma district they met with no resistance except from the Lamouts at the gorge of Ell-air-Sibiet (1)

1. In the mountains of Tass-Khayata, between the rivers Yana and Indigirka."

9: Stadling--112-114 E-3 (1898) 1901 Yakut-1-3
116, 175, 669, 687, 177.68 Russia
636.68

"A merchant of Yakutsk in those early times has left a description in a manuscript, which has been preserved, of the way in which the natives were treated. He says: 'The Vojevodes or Military Governors began their rule by imposing the most intolerable burdens in the way of taxes, which went not only to the government, but also to appease the insatiable covetousness of the tax-gatherers. They oppressed, tormented, and tortured [113] the subjugated natives, under pretext of their taxes being in arrear, but the amount of these taxes was never fixed'. Driven to despair by these constant extortions, the natives revolted, but these risings were quenched in blood, thanks to the firearms of their oppressors. A whole series of the most barbarous punishments were then inflicted on the rebels. By order of the vojevode Golovin, the ears and noses of the rebellious Yakuts were cut off and their eyes put out; they were suspended by iron hooks fastened in their backs and between their ribs, and some of them were buried alive. Within the old fort there was a special torture-chamber, where the torture-master worked from early in the morning till late at night. A short respite was afforded the natives when quarrels arose between the vojevodes Gleboff and Golovin over the spoil. Golovin, who was dismissed and punished with the knout, was succeeded by a number of vojevodes who remained only a short time at their post. But the extortions from the natives did not diminish, and their sufferings became intolerable when Andrei Afanasevitch Baryschnieff was appointed to the office of vojevode in Yakutsk in

the year 1675. It was during his rule that political offenders and sectarians began to be exiled to the province of Yakutsk, the former usually arriving there with their tongues cut out. 'When Baryschnieff entered on his office,' says the above-quoted Moskvin in his narrative, 'a régime of veritable terrorism began. Almost every day sectarians and natives were executed in Yakutsk in the most barbarous manner.' The smallest offences were [114] punished in the most horrible way. The culprits were cut in pieces, burnt alive, boiled alive in kettles, etc.

This fiend of a vojevode was replaced by a certain Priktonsky, under whose rule the Yakuts made, in 1682, their last effort to throw off the foreign yoke. Many sectarians and some Kossacks joined the rebels. The revolt was suppressed and followed by the usual monstrous cruelties. One of the leaders of the revolt, Dschennik, for example, who had been wounded and brought to Yakutsk, was skinned alive! Those who were left of the beaten Yakuts fled to the Vilui, Yana, and Kolyma.

The reform-movement which passed over European Russia in the beginning of the 18th century did not at all touch the far-off Yakuts. Only larger and denser did the throngs of exiles sent to Yakutsk become, and they increased still more during the troublous times immediately after the death of Peter I., many of the noblest and greatest sons of Russia being expatriated to the distant tundras of Yakutsk to be buried alive

near the Arctic sea. The vojevodes still continued to rule as tsars in Yakutsk, official 'Revisors,' who were sent there to investigate into their rule, were imprisoned, knouted, and sent back to Irkutsk."

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2



most of the vocabulary and the grammatical structure are undoubtedly Turkic in origin. At the same time, the language contains a considerable number of loan words from the Mongol and Tungus languages. Academician V. V. Radlov (1908) put forward the hypothesis that the vocabulary, phonetic structure, and even the grammatical structure of the Yakut language has a pre-Turkic, more ancient stratum of partly Mongol and partly indeterminate origin.

The latest research, admittedly, has not confirmed this hypothesis; hence the problem of non-Turkic elements in the Yakut language requires further study. Analysis of the names of the Yakut tribal-clan groups (known from 17th-century documents and also from later data) confirms that the Yakut population is further made up of immigrant groups from the south. To judge by the names, these include the present-day Batulins, Khorins, Tumats, Ergits, and some other clans and naslegs[1]. It may be considered that pastoral groups, taking their nomadic culture with them, gradually infiltrated the Middle Lena Basin from the south, from the Baykal regions. One of the principal groups of these migrants from the south was evidently the Kurykans—a Turkic people inhabiting the western Baykal region in the 9th and 10th centuries. Since some of the Kurykans clearly contributed to the composition of the western Buryats later on, this explains many features of similarity in the culture of the western Buryats and Yakuts and the wide distribution of the same anthropological type among both of them.

The trek northwards was gradual and took a long time. In the Amga–Lena watershed, under conditions favorable for pastoralism, these newly arrived groups settled down, establishing contact with the local hunting-fishing population. In the process of economic and cultural contact, there was gradual absorption of the local population by the newcomers. A higher, pastoral type of economy and southern elements of culture, as well as the Turkic language, became predominant.

Such is the ethnogenesis of the Yakuts in the light of present-day knowledge.

Precise historical accounts of the Yakuts only date from the time of their first contact with the Russians, that is to say, 1620, and annexation to the Russian State. At that time the Yakuts were not a single political unit, but were divided into a number of independent tribes. Tribal relations were already decomposing, however, and there was a fairly clearly marked class stratification. The tsarist voyevods and soldiery took advantage of the intertribal strife to break the resistance of some of the Yakut population; they also took advantage of the class differences within it by pursuing a policy of systematic support of the ruling aristocratic clique, the princelings (toyons), whom they turned into their own agents for purposes of governing the Yakut district. From that moment on, the class differences among the Yakuts began to become more clearly marked.

The Yakut masses led a hard life. They paid tribute in sable and fox furs, had to perform a number of other compulsory services and were exploited by the tsarist soldiery, Russian merchants and their own toyons. After several unsuccesful uprisings (1634, 1636–1637, 1639–1640, and 1642), and after the toyons had gone over to the side of the voyevods, the Yakut masses could only retaliate against the oppression by sporadic attempts at resistance and flight from their native ulusy to outlying

[1] A territorial and population unit; originally, the members of a single camp, now equivalent to the rayon.—Ed.

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2



the whole of their lives, and only occasionally eat their fill . . . it is a country of systematic starvation."[4] But the Yakut toiling masses were particularly badly off during the long and severe Yakutiyan winter. "The periods of hunger," wrote another observer, "when there is absolutely nothing to eat, when all the crumbs have been picked up and consumed, when the cows carrying calves are not milked, and nature, paralyzed by the cold, firmly resists all attempts to find food, are repeated every year and two-thirds of the Yakut population have to suffer for a fairly prolonged period on this account."[5]

On the other hand, individuals with fortunes of tens of thousands of rubles stood out among the wealthy Yakut hierarchy. The wealthy estates developed mainly through trade and various kinds of speculation, although the owners did not hesitate to apply the old patriarchal-feudal methods of exploitation in amassing their wealth.

Crushed by the omnipotence of the toyons, the masses of poor people in the ulus hardly dared to protest or fight for their rights. It was only now and then that the toyon oppression gave rise to outbursts of protest, but these were sporadic and promptly suppressed. This was the fate of the revolt of Vasiliy Manchara (1830-1850), hero of the Yakut legends.

Given the sharp class contradictions, it was extremely characteristic that certain very archaic survivals were retained in the Yakut social structure and left on it their own strange imprint. Some of these survivals were nothing more than form devoid of its original content.

Right up to the Revolution the Yakuts retained their division into clans (*аймаки*). But the clans were purely administrative units legalized by the "Native Code" of 1822, although they were historically descended from the ancient clans of the clan-tribal stage.

At the head of these administrative clans stood elected elders (who were called in the old-fashioned Yakut language "princelings" (kinees, or achchygyy kinees—"small princeling"). Several clans banded into a nasleg, which was also governed by an elected elder (in actual fact often hereditary), known in the Yakut language as ulakhan kinees or "great prince," who together with the clan elders made up the "clan administration." A group of naslegs formed an ulus, at the head of which there was an elected ulus head and a "native council." The ulusy, and also some of the naslegs, and even the clans, were historically associated with the ancient Yakut tribes, whose names they continued to bear—for example, the Meginskiy, Borogonskiy, Baturusskiy, Namskiy, Western and Eastern Kangalasskiy and other ulusy, the Betyunskiy, Batulinskiy, Ospetskiy and other naslegs.

At the end of the 19th century there were in all 17 ulusy, divided into 230 naslegs and 934 clans in the Yakut district (in the four okrugs—Yakutskiy, Vilyuyskiy, Verkhoyanskiy and Kolymskiy, since in the fifth—Olekminskiy Okrug—the ulusy were replaced by volosts of the Russian type).

Only the terminology of the tribal structure was retained in this administrative system. In actual fact, the tribal administrations and native councils were only organs of power of the ruling toyon stratum

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[4] V. F. Troshchanskiy. Nabroski o yakutakh Yakutskogo okruga (Notes on the Yakuts in the Yakutskiy Okrug). Kazan', 1911, p. 17.

[5] V. L. Seroshevskiy. Yakuty (opyt etnograficheskogo issledovaniya), 1 (The Yakuts [Attempt at an Ethnographic Study]). St. Petersburg, 1896, p. 423.